

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. VIOLET CARPENTER

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Conducted by:

Dr. James L. Dodson

--and--

Miss Lilly Annida Elrretti

Dodson: Mrs. Carpenter, I wonder if you would give us your full name and tell us how long you have lived in the valley?

Carpenter: I'm Violet Carpenter, Violet Donnely Carpenter, and I've lived in the valley since 1911.

Dodson Were you born here in the valley?

Carpenter: No, I wasn't born here. I came here as a small child.

Dodson: Where were you born? Where did you come from?

Carpenter: I was born in Oklahoma, which was Indian territory at the time, before it was a state.

Dodson: That's right! That's very interesting. What caused you to come to California?

Carpenter: Well, for one thing, my daddy had always sent mother and me here every winter, so we wouldn't be in the cold back there. And finally, dad took his business out here, which was hauling.

Dodson: Did you go to school here, Mrs. Carpenter?

Carpenter: Oh yes, I went to school here. And our first school here in the valley, was that is in Van Nuys. Hotels and some buildings that they were putting up for businesses, because of course there was no school built. And dad, uh, being in the hauling business, began hauling for the building of the new grammar school. Which is uhm, still in the same location, that it was at that time. They haul bricks and ...?... and poured the other building materials with team in those days.

Dodson: Do you recall any of those buildings that uh, you went

to school in? Before they put up the , what was that name...

Carpenter: On the corner of uhm, Erwin. And on both sides of the street we had school. And the building started over on the uh, east side of Van Nuys Boulevard and Erwin, and then they moved over over to the west side. And eventually we moved moved on the, part of the grammar school only part of the grammar school, the parts of it were the high school, grammar school, and everything in the one building. And then after the grammar school was completed, then the high school was built, and it was built across from the other side of town. And at that time then when they have completed enough, they, the high school people and junior high as far as the seventh grade, moved into the high school. And it remained that way since... for a number of years because then, before the Van Nuys Junior High was built.

Dodson: Now, we have a picture of Van Nuys in 1914, that shows the grammar school with the dome on top. Now did you ever go to that one?

Carpenter: Oh yes. Oh yes, that was, that was really the auditorium that has the dome on it.

Dodson: I see. It's a very unusual piece of architecture, most people that would look at it would never guess that was a school.

Carpenter: Yes, that's true, it was. And I've had...all those schools, both those schools, they're paved with the white ceramic brick.

Dodson: And that was hauled by your father? From Tropico?
[sp?]

Carpenter: Uhm, from Tropico. It took all day to get it all over from Tropico to there.

Dodson: I'm even surprise that they would even make it in one day... from all the way over there.

Carpenter: Uh hum.

Dodson: But they were able to do that?

Carpenter: Oh yes. Uh hmm.

Dodson: It must have taken many a load to put up those buildings.

Carpenter: Well, it did. He had a lot of teams. He had a big barn and lots of teams. Our barns were on Bessemer Street, right across from the freight depot in Van Nuys there. And of course our house was in front on Califa Street.

Dodson: Do you remember any of the names of your teachers? That teachers you had in elementary school?

Carpenter: Well, Mrs. Oar [sp?] was there as I recall... Mrs. Oar [sp?] was with us for so many years that, around Van Nuys, that I guess I remember her more than any of them. She later became Mrs. Johnson... and uh... she died in Van Nuys... but uh...I don't recall any of the grammar school teachers.

Dodson: I think you told us that you had a daughter that lived there? Is that right?

Carpenter: Yeah, I have a daughter Joy [sp?], from Gerald [sp?]

Dodson: I'm wondering...

Carpenter: And they both had graduated from Van Nuys high school, too.

Dodson: I'm just wondering, when they were in school, did you see any difference between the way they were being taught and the way you were being taught?

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: What differences did you notice?

Carpenter: That I think I have noticed uh, more of the change in the next generation, which is the grandchildren. I think that... they... the...we really did a lot of work in school. Then my children had it a little bit easier, I don't think they accomplished as much as I did. But they did very well because they were both college material. And but, when it came to the grandchildren, they went to the Reseda High, which is in Woodland Heights too, but I don't think but I don't think that they got out of school. Each generation is given less or else get less somehow or other. They're not as educated as we were.

Dodson: Now we're hearing a great deal, at the present time, about role of standards. Were you conscious of that with your grandchildren? If not as much as being asked that way?

Carpenter: Oh, definitely! They don't ask, they didn't ask so much from the grandchildren as they did from my children and as much as I was asked to do. We had homework, we had loads of homework, and we were expected to turn in pages of it every uh, day at school. And now, I don't think they even know what it is.

Dodson: Can you tell us anything about uh, your experiences in high school? What sort of courses would you take there?

Carpenter: Well I took business. I took bookkeeping, and uh, shorthand, and typing, and then uhm, of course I took all the other regular things, like history, and enlish, and language. I took Spanish and uhm, because at that time, we had a number of...Van Nuys, always had had lots of Spanish speaking people. And uhm, we had a teacher that taught, she gave us a choice, she said, "I will teach you from the beginning," when we started our Spanish classes, "I will teach you either the Mexican or what we associate it as, or I could teach you Castilian Spanish, and it's entirely a different type of a language. So we took the Spanish, or the Mexican, of course because that's what we were associating with.

Dodson: How well have you remembered your Spanish, would you say? Was the teaching good enough? Was...

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: ...thorough enough that you were able to use it in conversation?

Carpenter: Not... I'm not too good at conversation, but I can understand it. I think that with most languages you understand it more than you uh...

Dodson: Speak it?

Carpenter: ...speak it. Because, I think that you're afraid to speak it.

Dodson: I think most of us are afraid of the way we mispronounce it.

Carpenter: Yes! I think that's it. If I've been to Mexico a number of times I might get along just fine. But the children... ha ha ha...

Dodson: They don't criticize you, right? Ha ha ha

Carpenter: No, that's right! And we traded, I agreed to camp down there every year, in uh, Guaymas. And uh, the children would plod around our trailer, and I would trade words with them. You know, they were learning English because in Mexico, you had to have so much English before you can get out of school. So the children used to trade words with me. We had quite a nice visit with them.

Dodson: Do you feel that the Spanish that you got is taught in a more thorough way, perhaps, than uh, your children or your grandchildren got? Did your children study Spanish too?

Carpenter: My son did. But uh, and I believe that that I got more out of it than he did. Although I noticed that he's helping some teenagers now, with their Spanish.

Dodson: I see. Do you have much occasion to use it here in the valley? When you studied it? With the spanish speaking people here?

Carpenter: Not really, because they were forced to speak English, of course, around here. And they always did speak English to us. But, uh, it was nice to know. But they were saying it when they were talking to one another.

Dodson: I see. Well, we still find in our schools in Los Angeles, that we do get children who are entirely spanish speaking. Even though they were born here.

Carpenter: Uh hmm. Well that I think comes from the home, entirely.

Dodson: Yes. Because they learn to speak at home. And I guess learning spanish was all it counts, so they didn't learn any English. Do you remember any of the teachers you had in high school?

Carpenter: Oh yes. We used to have old Mr. Nathan Smith [sp?] and we had a Ms. Levine [sp?] who was our English teacher and we had uhm, Ms. Snyder [sp?]...and then I think, Mrs. Hahn [sp?]...Mrs. Clark, and some of these teachers I had in school, and my children had them.

Dodson: That reminds me, we had interviewed a Ms. Van Winkle [sp?] who taught at an elementary school. Do you remember that name at all?

Carpenter: No I don't.

Dodson: I'm not sure what school she taught in. But she's in her 90's now. And she has taught here or Van Nuys, I'm not quite sure which.

Carpenter: No, it could've been San Fernando because the main building was in Van Nuys.

Dodson: I see. Was there the same emphasis on athletics you would, would you say, when we were in high school than you would about now, with student competition and all that sort of thing?

Carpenter: Well, yes. There was a school rivalry, of course. If you could beat San Fernando, it was between Van Nuys and San Fernando. We were very congenial with Canoga Park but uh, I think that uh, but it's still, if you

didn't have your lesson done in the ninth hour before the game, you didn't go in the game. There was no fooling around, you had your lessons first. So I would say that the school were more formal than the athletics. I don't know how much go for it now, but I think they're getting quite popular. I tried to pass Birmingham last night about 7 o'clock...ha ha and there was a ...?... mass of people there.

Dodson: How about discipline in those schools in those days? Do you feel that that was different than it is now?

Carpenter: Definitely! Definitely, and I am for it. There was no smoking on the school grounds, there was no smoking when you left the school ground, that was a no-no. No person going to high school was allowed to go, with out, if they smoke that is, or anything like that. And of course there is no drinking and uhm, and of course we didn't know what drugs was.

Dodson: No, I haven't found anyone who used to have drugs or narcotics problem at all.

Carpenter: Oh no no! Oh you see, we were farm country then. And when school was out you come home because there's chores to do. The girls got home because they were from a big family and you've got berries and the milking started by four o'clock. And the girls assisted with the uh, taking care of the milk. And there were seeding to be done and the boys had that to do and there was irrigating to be done and that would go on. And that with their school work was enough to handle, there wasn't any time for fooling around, wasting time with nothing to do. Everybody had chores to do, one kind or another, so everybody was busy.

Dodson: I see.

Carpenter: And it was an accepted way of life. You see, we had tremendously big farms here. And the Petits, they had big farms, and they hired lots of people. We had a man, a China man that used to raise potatoes, a special brand of potatoes for the uh, New York Market for the big restaurant in New York and they refer to the great big potatoes. Now that doesn't sound very unique but in those days it was something special that they did. And we raised big ...?...they were for the Idaho ...?... and my dad used to haul them and ship them out on express again. And he had acres and acres. There were thousands of acres on the cultivation here so somebody had to take care of them.

Dodson: Yes. Potatoes-growing was an important crop here then?

Carpenter: Oh yes. This China man Dujo [sp?] a Mr. Dujo uhm, as I say, took care of the big restaurant in New York and his was very special and of course he raised everything, too. And he had big acres and acres of lettuce, beans, beets, sugar beets, he used to raise lot of those.

Dodson: Now your family didn't farm, did they?

Carpenter: No, my dad was always in the hauling business. He had many, many teams and then finally he started hauling uhm, lumber from the harbor. And took it right off the boats there from Terminal Island and bring it out to the valley. He did that and so, we first started out with what they called hard patters and then he got?.... and they were of course faster ...?.... And then when he quit business he had thirteen ...?....

Dodson: Well, I can imagine that kept him busy, he hadn't time

for farming.

Carpenter: No, he didn't do any farming. We always had many horses but I think that was the fact that he thought everybody ought to have a horse to ride. So we had, I always had a horse, and uhm, we had a cow, and things like that.

Dodson: Do you by any chance remember when the place where Valley College is now was a dairy?

Carpenter: Oh yes. Hmm...yes.

Dodson: We met the Ciocca family that used to have the dairy there. And the Bundy's had a poultry farm...

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: Parts of it outside. Do you remember that?

Carpenter: Oh yes, I do! Indeed! We used to go down to the Bundy's...mother used to go down there to get her fryers. And they culled, as they used to call it, they would take the cuckolds out and save the hens for the big market. And they would take the baby chicks and she would take the cuckolds and bring them out and put them in a pen and raise them as fryers. And of course that was very reasonable and it made good food.

Dodson: Yes. Well I know that before we began taping this, we asked you a little bit about recreation in the valley that you remember. How would you describe that?

Carpenter: Well, there just wasn't any. I'll tell you one thing we used to do at that day, it would be hard for people to understand. But the first pavement that we had in

the valley that is, "to us", was then uhm... a road. Was the cabin, that was Chandler Boulevard, whrh is now Van Nuys Boulevard. But Chandler from the railroad tracks clear down to Ethel Avenue, was a pave. And we used to get abreast, on our rollerskates, at night, and we would start at the railroad tracks and hold hands, and there was twenty or thirty of us across that street, and we would skate all the way down to Ethel.

Dodson: There could not have been much traffic!

Carpenter: There was no traffic! There was no traffic. We used to laugh about it. And there were also street lights, there were some clusters of street lights that Bell [sp?] light that had five lights on it, and my dad used to say when they put the lights in was so jackrabbits can eat at night. And so uh, we used to do this in the evening. We get the adults, the kids, everybody on the skates and we had two or three rows going down there. It was a little harder coming back, because it was uphill...ha ha ha... but it was great fun going down. Now that was one of the things we used to do. And over at the high school, I have seen the principal and the assistant principal over there, or the vice principal, with a great long rope. It would be twenty or thirty feet long, turning rope for us for jump-rope at noon time at school. Now I know, this is the stuff that kids at school today would laugh at, but we used to do that at noon at lunch-time and everybody was great sports. We were all just like one big family. I remember one time, one of the Whitsett boys come to school, and I happen to be standing out there, he came in barefooted with overalls on. And I know that today that was unacceptable. But the principal looked at him, and he said, "Paul, if you don't come from such a wealthy family," he said, "I would send

you home immediately... to change your clothes." He said, "We do not come to school looking like you do this morning." But he said, "Under the circumstances, I'll let you go until tomorrow." Ha ha ha... "But don't come back with overalls and barefooted again!" Now Paul was just appalled. Have you ever been to the Valley Fedral?

Elrretti: No.

Carpenter: All right, that's his father in that picture up there. That's the Valley Federal.?....large portrait of him, and that's the father of of Paul Whitsett.

Dodson: I think the only clothes rule we have in the present time, is that the student must wear shoes... other than that, it's up to him.

Carpenter: ...said go ahead huh?

Elrretti: It said there's no?....

Dodson: No, that's true. But in clothes, I think wearing shoes is the only rule we have. And that's so they won't hurt their feet.

Carpenter: ... ha ha ha... to put the damage suit down!

Dodson: Yes, that's really what it's for. Now there is a rule also that you can't smoke in class, that's for the safety for all.

Carpenter: Oh, I hope so!

Dodson: Now, I'm not sure that some instructors would file....? But in those days, you didn't even permit smoking on the

school grounds.

Carpenter: Oh no! And you don't even smoke after school. If anybody caught you smoking after school then off the school grounds!! Even, I've seen some of the boys suspended sometimes for a week, for being tardy. They used to be maybe it's still there, they uhm...Christian Science Church? Over and near the cross up there on Gilmore?

Dodson: I'm not sure.

Carpenter: And uh, one day, there was two of the boys over there, sitting behind a shrub, smoking a cigarette. And they were suspended for over a week!

Elrretti: Were they in high school?

Carpenter: High school.

Elrretti: How old do you have to be to smoke, though?

Carpenter: Well, I don't know what it is now, but they figured that after you were out of high school. Well, you usually graduated by eighteen, I think. Why, if you started school at six, you're usually through by eighteen.

Dodson: So presumably, just presumably, when I'm out of high school, I can smoke whenever I want.

Carpenter: Well, sure, because they were out of the jurisdiction of the school, then.

Dodson: Now, we were talking about this boy, that came to school not properly attired. What rules were there on the girls on what they should wear? Or were there rules?

Carpenter: Well, we just started wearing minis and skirts. And everybody did it. We didn't have rules then, on clothing. But if somebody, it was a sort of... we sort of govern ourselves, I guess self-government you'd call it. Because if girls come to school with skimpy blouses on, and things like that, of course we all wore camisoles and big white vests, that nobody ever heard of now. But if the blouse was too thin, they were told not to wear it by some of the girls. From the rest of the girls, we'd say that we don't like to see you in this thing. And uh, it was sort of the self-government thing, and we wore many blouses. Mostly all the way through high school. And during the winter times, sometimes you'd wear dark skirts and uh, dark, well we did say the blouses were white, but sometimes they have blue collars or something.

Dodson: But there would've been no situation where of wearing jeans or slacks? Or something like that?

Carpenter: Oh no!! You didn't...well, women wouldn't wear them. I wore riding skirt, I wouldn't wear pants to ride in. I wore a riding skirt, a divided skirt!

Elrretti: Have you ever heard of ...?..., remember?

Dodson: Yes. We interviewed a lady yesterday, who was a very well-known rider in the valley, and uh, in the theatrical world, Bonnie ...?.... And Lilly was wondering if you ever heard of her?

Carpenter: Bonnie? Is that a stage name or what?

Dodson: Uhm, it was the name that she used but it is her real name as well. And she did some stunt riding for some of the early westerns...

Carpenter: Oh, well she might have worked at, yes, she might have worked at for Universal City or any company like that. Sure...

Dodson: But you have never heard of her?

Carpenter: No, I don't. I'm not familiar with her.

Dodson: Do you have any other question Lilly, that you'd like to ask so far on these people?

Elrretti: No, not right now.

Dodson: O.K. What else did you do for recreation, Violet? I believe you said your father took you down to the beach?

Carpenter: Oh yes. He used to always go to the beach on Saturdays and Sundays, Dad used to take us down there. We had our first car in 1914, so from then on it was quite bearable but before that, we used to take the red cars. We'd take the cars from here down to Fourth and Broadway, from the valley, and then we'd get over and catch the Venice car and go down on the Blue car.

Dodson: Was that Main Street Station?

Carpenter: Uhm...

Dodson: That's where you caught it?

Carpenter: I can't... I guess we did! Yes, I guess. One was the valley car that came in there at uhm...

Dodson: The Subway Terminal?

Carpenter: The Subway Terminal, yeah, at Fourth and Broadway. But

uhm, we used to do that, and then in 1914, of course in those days I used to... uh dad got a car and we'd go down to the beach. We loved the ocean. So when Saturday comes, here we go down the beach. So we spend Saturdays and Sundays down at the beach, it takes us to spend the day.

Dodson: What route did you follow to go from the valley down to the beach, when you had your own car?

Carpenter: Over Cahuenga Pass.

Dodson: Uh hmm, I see. Was the Pass in pretty bad shape then?

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: Was it difficult to drive through?

Carpenter: Oh yes. It was just really, there was only one pavement in the middle of the of the canyon parts. There was just one strip of pavement over parts of it, and lots of parts of it was gravel.

Dodson: So that must have taken you a while to get there?

Carpenter: Oh yes, it took quite a while to get down there. I can't tell you just how long, but two or three hours possibly.

Dodson: Were movies increasingly common in the valley?

Carpenter: We finally have a motion picture place and uh, Sam Greenberg put it in, in Van Nuys. And they used to show the old silent films.

Dodson: Uh hmm. Do you remember what the admission price of it then?

Carpenter: Well, it's usually five or ten cents. I don't know, I don't really recall I just... I guess it was a dime we paid for the show.

Dodson: In those days episodes movies were rather common, wasn't it?

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: Where you did one episode one week and the other episode the next week? You keep the kids coming?

Carpenter: Oh yes. Oh sure!

Dodson: Do you remember any of the names of those? Or lead songs?

Carpenter: Oh no, I guess there were the old... uhm, the pictures like uhm, Betty, or not Betty White, but uh, the last name is White...

Dodson: Pauline White?

Carpenter: Pauline White, yes! The Perils of Pauline, they usually have those and they would leave her tied to the railroad tracks and the train was coming.

Dodson: Uh hmm.

Carpenter: And they would uh, they would come and see it next week.

Dodson: They had to come back next week to see if the train ran over her.

Carpenter: And uh, Mary Pickford, I remember seeing her. She...uh, I can't remember what she did, now...

Dodson: I guess she was the most famous of the silent films, in the early days.

Carpenter: Yes. I think so, yes.

Dodson: Is there anything else you commonly did? Did you like to do the dances?

Carpenter: Oh yes! We had... of course, our church we had the uh, Methodist Church, and uh, the Presbyterian Church, and these don't approve of dancing. In fact, none of the churches approved of dancing, as far as I know. And uh, we had...

Dodson: Well the Catholic Church was, couldn't have imposed because of the fiestas and...

Carpenter: No, I think the Catholics might have been, it might have been all right with them, but uh, we didn't have a dance for a lot of years. And then finally as the organizations began forming, in the valley or in Van Nuys, at least, why then they built halls and then we could have dances in those halls. But it wasn't approved of at the uh, school, either. No dancing in school.

Dodson: Do you remember the names of any of those dances that were popular? Like the kind of dances you do?

Carpenter: The Tango, and Waltz, the Foxtrot, the one-step, the two-step, and uh,I don't know, I just forgot all of them.

Dodson: Well, what do you think that are the types of dancing that are done now? You've seen pictures of them, I'm sure. Ha ha ha...

Carpenter: Well, I don't think it's any fun... ha ha ha...in the

first place, but uh, if it pleases them to do it, so then it's all right I guess. We did stranger things too, I guess but uh,

Dodson: But to me it certainly looks like just jumping up and down, I don't see any reason for a partner at all, because they dances by themselves.

Carpenter: They don't! You get out there and you do your own thing, to music. It's sort of interpretive, I guess you'd call it... ha ha ha...

Dodson: Well, would you like to make a comment on that? ha ha ha.. I'd really like to dance and see what they'd play... ha ha ha... Are we being unfair to modern dancing?

Elrretti: I think so!

Carpenter: Well, I want to tell you something. Last New Year's I hooked up with a party in uhm, Lincoln and we uh, the young people got me on the floor and I had to do it. Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Ha ha ha... did you do it?

Carpenter: Well, I got away with it anyway. Ha ha ha...

Elrretti: Did you like it?

Carpenter: Well, not particularly.

Elrretti: Didn't you used to dance the tango?

Carpenter: Tango! Oh yes.

Elrretti: That was South American.

Carpenter: Hhmm.

Elrretti: Who brought it? The Mexicans?

Carpenter: No, I think that the, I think that the tango came from uhm, well, I don't know!

Dodson: Wasn't that an Argentinian dance?

Carpenter: It's an Argentinian dance. Yes I think, well the movie became popular, you know, from Broadway, and ...

Elrretti: Do you think....

[Tape 1 side A ended]

Carpenter:of course we had the uh, we used to ...?....the young in Los Angeles. And we've had night dance halls. There were bouncers there, you know what I mean. And if you went up to the door and you were not eighteen years old, you wouldn't get in there. Of course they used to wake up the neighbors every now and then, and the floor was covered with people to see everything that was... and I'll tell you how restrictive the churches are now. There were sermons, and there were the uhm, the rule, ...?....'s rule, and now we have one that?.... that strikes me as down there in Hollywood. It's called "starlight" or something like that. And it's for older adults. Senior citizens, not for senior citizens, but for older adults. It's ballroom dancing, but we used to go, and it's the same people that are going to this one as those older people now. That they're in their 60's and , that, uhm, when I was young, to these other ballrooms, and we're used to that sort of way. And it's, I don't know what type, but it's not like a disco type,

they have nice music, they have Lawren Bach music, you know what I mean, that type of music. And uh, that type of dancing. And they have brought it back, in the same ballroom, that's open again now. For a long time they were closed. But uh, when I was a kid and going to these places, they had matrons and men also that uh, patrol the hall all the time. And I don't think there was anybody, when they're dancing as a girl... when you're dancing with a girl, if you have your hands too low on their back or something, they'd tell you about that.

Dodson: They were pretty well policed, huh?

Carpenter: Oh, they were pleased. I know my mom and dad and the women here in church, and she said that "I heard you let your daughter go to the dance hall". And my mother said, "Nothing's going to happen out there on that dance floor". And she said, "I've seen more things happen", this was many many years ago, she's likely to see more happening coming home from prayer meetings on Wednesday nights than happens on that dance floor. She says, "Believe you me , " she says, "I've been down there and I know!"

Elrretti: Did you have to show your I.D. or anything to get in?

Carpenter: No, but they usually do. Ha ha ha... They just spot you if you were underage.

Elrretti: So if you were not underage, how could you prove it?

Carpenter: Well, they they would let you go in. They handle it subtly. And another thing too, there was a gang? from Wednesday afternoon, the matinee and I used to

ditch school, I was going down to business college, I'd ditch out and go in the afternoons....?....

Elrretti: Was there any drinking?

Carpenter: Oh no, that was in the Prohibition, there was no liquor period! And you didn't take any liquor in any of these dance hall either! If you did show up and you've been drinking, they filed them right now and out they went. They were really very nice places, they were not...uh...

Elrretti: They were not...

Carpenter: They were not honky tonk, if you know what I mean.

Dodson: Did we have any dance halls here in the valley, or were they only in Los Angeles?

Carpenter: No. We did have halls, that they would have private dances in once in a while, like the uhm, the lodges and different ones that we have dances for a benefit there once in a while.

Dodson: Do you recall where Sam Greenberg's theatre is located ?

Carpenter: Yes. The first theatre is located in about three doors above uhm, Erwin Street on Van Nuys Boulevard. The first one..

Dodson: What did he call it, do you recall?

Carpenter: Van Nuys Theatre was what he called it.

Dodson: Do you know whether it has some ...?... in there? Or not?

Carpenter: No, I don't think so.

Dodson: Lilly, do you have any questions about recreation and that sort of thing?

Elrretti: Well, mainly on whether they had a good time.

Carpenter: We did! I had a good time!! Uh hmm.

Dodson: You see, it sounded...

Carpenter: And I saw to it that my kids did too! I know my son, this may not be on the subject but, my son is taking care of fostered children. And he had to be interviewed for the permit to take them in his home. The woman takes all this information and she said, "Do you mind if I send somebody else back there tomorrow?" He said, "Well no, is that necessary?" And she says, "Yes, I don't believe you." She says, "Nobody today has the homelife that you had." She said, "I don't believe that parents take their children and see to their recreation and things the way your parents have." She says, "I can't believe that!!" She goes, "I think somebody else ought to take this information." Ha ha ha... So it is, I guess today, very unusual. But my parents thought that on Saturdays and Sundays I should have some place to go, and we have a good time. And it was all in fun. And uh, then every summer we went on trips, we went on vacations, we went to the beach. And then uh, I started taking my kid sister and her friends. I was, I chaperoned dances at the junior high, and over at the high school, all the way through my last one. And my children were both in the motion picture business. They both worked as extras. So I was with them all the time they were on the set. And of course that makes, kids used to say they don't know where their parents are

almost, I think. And uh, our children did everything together. I know that one night, I said to my husband, I said, "What are we doing over here at the dances? Our kids have all grown up and here we're still chaperoning dances!" But, when we went chaperoning dances, we were watching for dope, we were watching for booze. It was a job, at high school! And of course we never had any experiences like that when I was there.

Dodson: Did you feel that your children had greater opportunities for recreation than we did? Greater varieties of things?

Carpenter: Well, it changed somewhat. Because there weren't the dances to go to, that we had. There were lots of dances yes, but there was school dances and things like that. But we meant outside, for opportunities for our fun, a lot of it. Always on the weekends, we go to the beach. And we go swimming and we go roller skating, and uh, things like that. We had a real chain that we would do. We'd go swimming in the day time, in the afternoon we'd go roller skating, or else in the dinner hour we'd go to the skating rink, and then we'd get dressed and go to the dance halls. And we'd stay there 'til ten or eleven o'clock. And then of course, we'd take it home. But my folks always see that I got to where I wanted to go. And I did the same for my children. It was a different kind of recreation but I was, it always seems to me that I was always taking skin diving or something like that! Ha ha ha... And camping, and all that sort of thing. I always went and saw to it that they ought to go.

Dodson: You don't feel that you were deprived because you didn't have Disneyland Knott's Berry Farm...

Carpenter: Oh no!

Dodson: ...and Magic Mountain... and so on?

Carpenter: Oh my heavens, no! We had Venice. We had roller coasters at Venice, and we had roller skating rink, we had the dance halls, and we had the Fun Palace down in Venice. We had fun, they have raids of Fun Palaces in the world down there. And uh, so as small children we enjoyed those things and as we grew up there was older entertainment. I don't think we missed Disneyland, but I enjoy it today, but... ha ha ha...

Dodson: But you don't feel that you were deprived as a child because....

Carpenter: Oh no.

Dodson: ...it wasn't there then?

Carpenter: I should say no! Because we had plenty to do. And then when we ran out of everything else to do, why we'd race over these hills up there, these two hills. They're all covered with pasture and we'd race over those on horseback. Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Well, that would be a little bit difficult now, like you said.

Carpenter: Yes. Now I'd have to clear the ...?... to ride horseback!

Dodson: Since you're talking about riding, I understand that cruise night was quite an institution in Van Nuys.

Carpenter: Oh!

Dodson: How far back does that go in the history of Van Nuys? Do you know?

Carpenter: Well, I'm going to tell you that just about a year ago I got caught in that night and I didn't even know anything about it. Somehow or other it has passed me by, I have heard vaguely that there was such a thing, but I had no idea what it was. I thought, I was coming from Canoga Park, babysitting, and I thought, well I'll go right down Vanowen and pull on Van Nuys Boulevard. And I got off at Van Nuys Boulevard, and I got in the cruise. Oh heart, I was petrified! I thought, oh there's been an accident!

Dodson: Ha ha ha...

Carpenter: And then, as I crawl down the street, and the cars were coming in both sides of me, and the kids were yelling, and screaming back and forth. And I thought, well what is going on? I couldn't figure it out. And I tried to get to a curb, to get to a side street, to get off the street, I couldn't do that. And then finally, when I got to Calvert Street, I got off. I went down to Bradford, and got down on Sherman Oaks. Before I could get off and get out of the mess!

Elrretti: Down what street? ...Oh!

Carpenter: And when I got home, I was all frightened all this time you see, because I wasn't supposed to be out this time of the night. They tell us "oldies" to stay in at night. So wehn I got down, pull in the drive way here, I came out first. And I sat down, and I took this long breath, and I thought, what was going on? I didn't, I still, it still didn't dawn on me what it was!

Dodson: Uh hmm.

Carpenter: And so I called my daughter and I said, I'm home but I'm

scared to death! And I said, something is going on in Van Nuys! And I... and she said, "Mom, don't you know it's cruise night?" And I said, "Well, I sure didn't know and I had never dreamed of what it would be like to get caught up in this mess!" Of course, I'm always very cagey driving at night down here.

Elrretti: But they're?...., because I've been here for about ten or eleven months and when I first came here, my cousin started talking about, "we'd have to go Wednesday night to Van Nuys Boulevard." But see, I couldn't go out, so on Sunday night to Thursday night. So I didn't have any opportunity because my friend said Wednesday. So we went down to Van Nuys Boulevard to see all the crazy people...

Dodson: Do you have anything like that in Ecuador, Lilly?

Elrretti: Well, we have... I don't know, it's different, because we're still a conservative people.

Carpenter: Uh hmm.

Elrretti: Not that much,?.... not that much. You don't have to go to a party ...?,,, or anything like that, but in a way they're really?.... now. So where I come from it's a small town, and everybody knows everybody. And we have a few main streets, and there's one downtown that whenever, you know, want to fool around with somebody you'll go alone in a car. And guys will be sitting down over there. In a way I miss that! Ha ha ha...

Carpenter: Ha ha ha... It's just what you're used to.

Dodson: Well, I'd have to admit I've never been in cruise night. So... ha ha ha...

Carpenter: Oh, don't try it! I'll tell you, it leaves , if you knew... now, have I known, that that was what I was turning into, I wouldn't have been frightened. But first of all, I thought, Oh! There's been an accident. I wonder if I could get through? And here I am, knowing I'm not supposed to be out at night! Ha ha ha... They tell me that these "oldies" stay in at night.

Elrretti: It's not there anymore, is it?

Carpenter: The cruise?

Dodson: I think so...

Carpenter: Yes!

Elrretti: But, they're not so long that?.... getting stopped.

Carpenter: Well, they were getting a little rough, and ruined buildings and things. And so I think that has occurred some...

Dodson: I think some of the merchants were complaining.

Carpenter: Yes. Uh huh.

Dodson: Did you see any disorder when you were driving down?
Or was it just there?

Carpenter: Not really. They were just yelling back and forth at one another and things like that. And tooting horns and things like that. And every inch I got, I kept getting into the middle of the street and I couldn't get to the side streets to get off. And when I got off, I had been through ...?..., and I got off, then I came down and I started watching. I went down a block to Vesper and I kept watching Van Nuys Boulevard and it's

still was a mess. So, until I got clear down to Bob's down here, then it broke down here . Bob's Big.. uh, Hamburger stand. And I got over to Van Nuys then, and came on home. But uh, I was slightly upset!! Ha ha ha... If I'd known what I was getting into, or had I known that it was cruise night, I have vaguely heard that the kids but I thought maybe an extra of twenty or thirty cars on the boulevard.

Dodson: Well, I didn't know anything about it until just recently.

Carpenter: Oh wow!

Dodson: And I have never seen it. Ha ha ha...

Carpenter: You've missed something!

Dodson: Well I imagine you would've missed it too if you had only known about it!

Carpenter: I sure would! I sure would! Because, I was a little bit nervous. Now, if somebody said to me, "At ten o' clock tonight, get in your car and go to San Francisco", I'd think nothing of it. I'd get on the freeway and away I'd go. But to drive from here to San Fernando, I, uhm, getting scared!

Dodson: Uh hmm.

Carpenter: It's not safe here in the valley, to drive around.

Dodson: Now that of course brings up another point that we'd like to ask you about. Do you feel that it was much safer when you were in your teens in the valley, than it is now?

Carpenter: Oh, by all means yes! It was. Because, I don't think ...now we had Van Nuys and San Fernando have lots of Mexicans. And they are supposedly the ones that are causing a lot of this trouble. I can't believe it, because I was raised in the area, and we had lots of Mexicans, but uh, they never bothered us. They, they stayed to themselves and they never caused any trouble. They were good workers, and they were very shy, and uh, as far as I know, the uhm, there was never anything happening.

Dodson: You wouldn't have hesitated to go outside for a walk at night?

Carpenter: Oh no! Indeed no! You go anyplace. You go to a party, you go any place. You never thought about it. It was safe for anybody on the streets anywhere!

Dodson: I see. How about things like robberies? Were they common? Or burglaries?

Carpenter: I've never heard of one. Nobody ever locked their door. Maybe they didn't have anything in it that they wanted? Ha ha ha... Maybe that was it! No, I don't think anybody locked their doors.

Dodson: When do you think the change began to take place? And that you have to take the caution that you haven't done so before? Is that very recent, would you say?

Carpenter: Yes, yes. It's been uh.... there's been... within the last twenty years, I guess.

Dodson: Since the second World War...

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: you'd say, that it probably began since then?

Carpenter: Well, perhaps it was before, but I was not too much aware of anything. I never worried, when I was raising my children. The only thing, that uhm, was my concern when I was, when they were... with them, was at the studio. And that was a law that we had to be with them at the studio. It was for their protection.

Dodson: They were ...?... with them?

Carpenter: Oh yes. They were really good. And one of them was just six months old when he first started and I've gone there through eighteen years with him.

Dodson: Uh hmm.

Carpenter: And we had to be on the studio, because I've of course answered things for... we just had so many people over the... over the limits that they have now. Maybe now, now we know more about people...

Dodson: Yes.

Carpenter: ...than we did then. And uh, we were not aware, only that we just, we were just supposed to be there. Mothers were supposed to be always with their children in the studio. And of course, when we came home, they went to school and... an whatever time of day and night it was, why it wasn't very much of a problem. As long I was there for each other. But I think, as you say, it's been during the last twenty years that things have started. Cause, I've moved down to Encino. And then did I really realize that uhm, there was an awful lot of things going on... that I was not really aware of.

Dodson: What sort of religious life did you have uh, in the early days?

Carpenter: Well, in the early days, I went to the Presbyterian Church in Van Nuys. Of course the Methodist was the first one that came in, and then the Presbyterian, and then the Catholic. And I went to the Presbyterian one in Van Nuys and then when I got married, I joined the Episcopalian church and with my husband. And we raised the children in the Episcopal church.

Dodson: I see. Do er, most people were church goers at that time?

Carpenter: Oh yes. We went to church on Sundays.

Dodson: Did you say that the interest in church in here in the valley has declined somewhat since then? How do you feel about that? Were people more religious? Or ?

Carpenter: Well, it was, it seemed to me like, in the early years that people in my early years, that it was mandatory that you go to church.

Dodson: That is, you'd have a bad reputation in you don't go to church?

Carpenter: Yes, uh huh. Yes, because we were such a small community. It was part of a mandatory thing that we have church on Sundays or else everybody knew that you weren't there. And then of course, now, I think that I don't know how the churches are carried now. There doesn't seem to be problems. Everyone that I go to. I walked down to Cahuenga and the Methodist church once in a while. And sometimes I go down to Mobile to the Presbyterian and I belong to the St. Nicholas. Out in

Encino but I haven't been going out because it took an effort to get the car on! Ha ha ha to drive out there on Sundays. And we used to do that all the time.

Dodson: Do you remember any of the names of any ministers that you thought were outstanding?

Carpenter: Oh, Reverend Parkison [sp?], was the most gospel man that we had over there at the Presbyterian church. He?.... and I don't remember anyone else, either before or after that. And...

Dodson: He must have made quite an impression!

Carpenter: He did, he was just a doll! And he had such a cute little family and they came out here from Scotland. And I think that fascinated us because uhm, I know he used to ask me about his uhm, change for the money. What kind of change for the money, what kind of money is involved in change, and things like that. And uh, then uh, Father Cleon [sp ?] was the priest, in the Catholic church, and he was there for the new year's and and I don't really remember any of them before or after him. Uh, I can't remember any of the others.

Dodson: Do you remember the coming of the first World war? In the valley? And if people were accepting it?

Carpenter: Uh huh. It was quite a thing. Everybody just got busy. We save paper, we save bottles and uh, we had drives, paper drives and things like that and, and everybody worked and we conserved and everything, you know. We were all, we went all out for it.

Dodson: So there was an enthusiasm?

Carpenter: Oh yes. Definitely! We bought war bonds and war stamps and we uhm, save up, you know, and buy war stamps. Saving stamps.

Dodson: Well, they would have them in a small denominations, so the people can buy them?

Carpenter: Oh yes, uhm. I can't tell you what they were, but one was five dollars, I remember that, but, and I think the smaller ones were two, but uh...

Dodson: Were you noticing if there were any difference in the enthusiasm of between World War I and II?

Carpenter: uhm,

Dodson: ...in the pre- World War I and II? Were we pretty well united? Or...?

Carpenter: Oh yes, I think they were. Because in World War II, you see, I was with?.... and things like that. And uh, we all were donating to the Red Cross and stamps, and uh, the book that we read, I read three thousand books, and then there was the draft board, and things like that. So I think that uhm, I think that there were the same all-out for one as the other.

Dodson: Now, how would you compare it with the Vietnam War? Do you feel the enthusiasm for that being in balance?

Carpenter: Uh uh. I really don't, unless it has a family. I suppose if your family or my family were there, you would be totally engrossed in it, but otherwise I don't think so.

Dodson: No, that would be my impression too.

Carpenter: Uh hmm.

Dodson: Do you remember the coming of the Armistice for World War I?

Carpenter: Oh yes!

Dodson: On November 11th? What happened in the valley then?

Carpenter: Well, everything stopped. And everybody was celebrating. I think... It seems to me that my dad even told the fellows to stop work... the drivers... to quit work for the day... and everything. I mean, we just stopped everything, as I recall.

Dodson: Did you have any close relatives in the armed forces?

Carpenter: No, no. My grandfather was in the Civil War, and then we've left every one of them since. All my family did. Well, my daughter had one, her husband, I think. But outside of that, no. That's all, you know.

Dodson: I see.

Carpenter:?.... and so we have no soldiers in our family at all.

Dodson: Didn't your grandfather, you say...?

Carpenter: My grandfather was in the Civil War.

Dodson: Which side was he on, by the way?

Carpenter: The North... ha ha ha... he was a Yankee. He did guard at the White House afterward. He did guard...

Dodson: Now, I don't know whether I should admit it or not, but my family was on the other side.

Carpenter: Ha ha ha... you were on the South?

Dodson: We were the Southerners, we were in the south.

Carpenter: Well I never will forget this one time, you know, here in the valley, we have so many families that were with some Indian...and I mean their mother and father was and from different countries during the war. When we first came out here, and one day I said to my grandmother, "Where am I from?" And she said, "Why? What do you want to know for?" And I said, "Well, all these kids came from someplace else. They're grandmother or grandfather came from some place else." She said, "You are a Yankee!" and well I said, "No, that's not what I mean!" I said, "I want to know, am I some other nationality?" And she said, "No! You're just a Yankee!" ha ha ha...just a Yankee.

Dodson: Well, I think that some of us have been here for a long time. My ancestors came in the 18th century.

Carpenter: Uh huh.

Dodson: Well, they go back a long ways, as American history goes. Do you know how long you have been in Ecuador, Elly?

Elrretti: Three generations.

Dodson: Three generations?

Elrretti:?....

Carpenter: And where did they come from?

Elrretti: Italy.

Carpenter: Italy?

Elrretti: And then?....

Dodson: Are they about the third or fourth generation too?

Elrretti:?....

Dodson: I see. So, your grandfather and grandmother are, on your mother side, came from Spain?

Elrretti: No, my grandfather.

Dodson: Yourgrandfather did.

Elrretti: My grandmother came from Italy.

Dodson: I see.

Elrretti: I can always stop. I never learned those things.

Dodson: Well, you didn't know we were going to interview you on your ancestors anyway. So my thought of it was.

Elrretti: Yeah.

Dodson: What sort of war work did you do in the second World War? Or did you take any particular part in it?

Carpenter: Well, I, uh worked as a...

Dodson: USO and that sort of thing?

Carpenter: Oh yes, Uh hmm. I worked with USO, I worked here in the valley, and I worked down in uh, at Hollywood USO. And I worked... uhm, well every organization took part, you know, and we had the day in difference. We each took a day, for the USO, and we served food and entertained, and then I think... the stamp, the stamp, what am I trying to say?

Dodson: Rationings?

Carpenter: Rations book!

Dodson: Yes.

Carpenter: I did those... find people for those. You see, I worked in the Red Star ...?.... so through them, they can have a lot of things that are asked to be there.

Dodson: Do you remember whether there were any kind of scarcity that bothered you? Things that were in scarce supplies?

Carpenter: Well, we seem to get by on everything. Gasoline, maybe... ha ha ha... we were a little crazy about. And uh, I suppose food that we can easily do without, but we were?.... and everything, and I still think that it was, it wasn't too severe. As I recall...

Dodson: Do you recall any types of clothing scarcities? Or anything along that line?

Carpenter: Hoses, for one thing, those were the days when you wear silk hoses.

Dodson: And you couldn't get the silk?

Carpenter: No, and no nylons either.

Dodson: What was that?

Carpenter: Nylons. But uh, that was the one thing that it seemed to me, nobody could get. Of course, nobody smoked, so we didn't have to worry about getting any cigarettes. And uh, but I think that clothes really... maybe uh... I don't think there was anything else that was really obvious.

Dodson: So you don't feel as far as the valley was concerned, the war affected people in the sense of scarcity that they had to suffer to?

Carpenter: Oh no! No, no, no!

Dodson: Then it must have been convenient then?

Carpenter: We had plenty of food. We had plenty of food and everything. It was nothing of war, nothing like that.

Dodson: Do you remember the Great Depression of 1929? The effects of it?

Carpenter: I'm afraid I did... ha ha ha... yes.

Dodson: How long did it affect your family?

Carpenter: That was rough! Well, wages, of course, were down. And well, it just affected the same with everybody else, I guess. There was just wasn't money and there wasn't jobs, and the jobs doesn't pay much. You just made the money go, which we did. And we were able to feed ourselves.

Dodson: Your father had his own business?

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: So he wasn't thrown out of work?

Carpenter: No, he wasn't thrown out of work. And he...

[TAPE # 1 ENDED]

[TAPE # 2 STARTING...]

Dodson: ...During the Depression, were there any bread lines, or anything like that in the valley? Would you remember?

Carpenter: No, I don't think so. Not that I recall, I don't think so. There was down in Los Angeles. Of course, we are a part of Los Angeles, so we knew about them, but there was people down in the big city that needed help.

Dodson: Uh huhm...

Carpenter: We're all the way out here, you see, we had plenty of food. And... that was it. And we had gardens, and fruit trees, and we shared among us.

Dodson: So you felt that most people out here in the valley, does...

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: ...?...

Carpenter: I don't think that the Depression was too much, except

you might hear that somebody cut wages, or something like that. But it was a problem of not too much money flowing around. Everybody made every dime go, but I don't think we even discuss that for hours.

Dodson: There weren't problems, of you houses, or things, foreclosed and that sort of thing? As it occurred in other places?

Carpenter: Not, not to the extent that there would be an exhibit of things closing.

Dodson: Now, how about the Prohibition era? Did that affected the valley? Did you have bootleggers?

Carpenter: Oh sure! We had bootleggers everywhere. Of course we raised grapes out here, which went into brandy. And you may know, that I had a college student call me one day and he asked, "I have been referred to you by a friend of yours, that you made bathtub gin." And you know what bathtub gin is! And I said, "Yes, I know. And I will tell you." So I told her. She said that "I have to write some kind of a thesis on some thing on the Prohibition era." And she was trying to find out of anything, what the word "bathtub gin" was. Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Maybe you better put it on record on our tape, so the future will know!

Carpenter: Oh, all right! Well, when the brandy, when the grape are made into vines, and then the brandy, er, the wine is cooked in the steam cooker. And then the steam that comes off through that, has to be evaporated. And when it's evaporated, it goes into alcohol. And

it would be a pure-grade alcohol. So, in order to do that, they used to put the cooker, with the wine, up on the stand or something, beside the bathtub. Then they would put the coil, they have a proper coil, along proper coil for the steam to go through, and to cause the evaporation they would pack the bathtub full of ice. And then that coil would go through the sides of it and that makes your condensation, and that makes your alcohol! Er, it makes your coil, not a canvas, ha ha ha, but a ...

Dodson: Causes it to condense the moisture.

Carpenter: Yes. The condensation that makes it go into alcohol. And that is called "bathtub gin". To make it gin, it's alcohol and to make it gin you add in juniper berry. Oil of juniper berry tree.

Dodson: Now, how...

Carpenter: Now, how would I know? Now, I've seen it done! Ha ha ha...

Elrretti: I was going to ask that.

Carpenter: That's your answer, I've seen it done!

Dodson: Now, in all our interviews we get a little information we haven't had before!

Carpenter: No, well that...

Dodson: And I'm sure we haven't had the definition of a bathtub gin! Ha ha ha...

Carpenter: Well, I was asked by a college student last year. What

it was, what the work was, you know, she thought that it was just a phrase that they give you. But uhm...

Dodson: To tell you the truth, I thought so too!

Carpenter: Oh, did you? Ha ha ha... Well, that's actually what it was, because they would use these long coils. And they weren't coiled, they were coiling so they wouldn't have any strung out, you know, and it had to go over a length. Well, in order to get it over to condense, they would put it through this bathtub full of ice. Ha ha ha... so when the ice man called and brought five hundred pounds of ice, to put in the bathtub, you knew there was gin making! Ha ha ha...

Dodson: He probably knew, too! If that's where they put the ice.

Carpenter: He probably knew. Well, anyways, there were lots of grapes here in the valley so I'm sure we had our share of uhm, of wines, and grapes, and all that sort of thing that was made into alcohol. And also, they used to make peach brandy, and all sort of brandies out of the fruit, because the valley was full of fruit. And people used to come from downtown, to come out here everyday. I remember one friend that my daughter had that said that her father used to come out here and and get chestfull of grapes, and then he'll bring it in to his garage, in Los Angeles, in his garage, until at night and then they would make gin and wine from these grapes.

Dodson: What could you say the attitude of the valley people were on Prohibition? Did they feel that it was unnecessary? And they weren't really breaking much of a law when they made wine or something like that?

Carpenter: Well I don't think that everybody did it, of course, but a few people did. Because there was everything available to make it out of. You know they just did it, most of them just did it for a lark! Because of the fact that you're doing something that you're not supposed to be doing. And I guess that was fit. But uh, I don't think that it was general. But I think it would be different ones making things like that.

Dodson: Would you feel that the people in the valley were glad when that was repealed Prohibition, or enjoyed it favorably?

Carpenter: I don't really know what people really thought of that. As one way or the other.

Dodson: I think it was really impossible to enforce it, because so many people...

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: ...throughout the country as a whole didn't feel they were breaking much of a law.

Carpenter: They made what they wanted themselves.

Dodson: Yes.

Elrretti They could do that.

Carpenter: Yes. A lot of people wanted to make it their own. Uh hmm.

Dodson: A lot of people seemed to, as I've been told, favor it because they were making their own wine in the house. For themselves and it wasn't much of a problem!

Carpenter: That was all right, too, huh? But....

Dodson: Now, you were very small then when water was brought into the valley for...

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: ...the first time. But do you remember that?

Carpenter: But I was up there when Mr. Mulholland turned the water into the valley.

Dodson: Is that right?

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: I must have been mistaken.

Carpenter: Yes, yes.

Dodson: Do you remember his speech?

Carpenter: Well, I don't think I did ... ha ha ha... because I probably couldn't hear him! But, I was up there, watching the water come down, through the....uh, the....

Dodson: The cascade?

Carpenter: The cascade. Uh humm.

Dodson: I memorized that speech.

Carpenter: Oh, you did?

Dodson: "There it is, take it!"

Carpenter: Yes! Ha ha ha...

Dodson: That was the whole speech!

Carpenter: Well!

Dodson: And I think that must have been a sort of electrifying, dynamic speech for the people of the valley! And then the water began flowing in...

Carpenter: Probably. Well, we were so excited as kids, you know, to see that water bouncing down these rock fixings. And, you know, the cascades, and it bubbles down, that was quite a sight!

Dodson: It's still there, I think.

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: It's still there.

Carpenter: And they have another one. They put a new one, but uh, still...

Dodson: You haven't seen them, have you? The cascade, the water coming down from the north of the valley?

Elrretti: No.

Dodson: I showed you the one pipe on one side of the hill, but on the other side of the hill it's open.

Elrretti: Oh!

Dodson: And the water comes down. And you can see it coming down. And with these rocks that were put into the

channel. It's really quite interesting to see.

Carpenter: A couple of weeks ago, I followed the American... what is it called? The American Canal?

Dodson: Uh hmm.

Carpenter: From the side of the river water. It comes all the way down. It comes down to highway 5, up to the northern California.

Dodson: They're actually not bringing any water down now.

Carpenter: ...not bringing any water. The canal is sold, but they aren't bringing any water into L.A.

Dodson: That's what I understand, yes. And we stopped getting it because of the drought situation .

Carpenter: Yes. Oh it is dry up there! I just came up there for six weeks. In California, I've been up in Red Bluff up the entire valley and back down. All and around up there. Up in Tehama County, they were dry.

Dodson: Yes, that was what I understand.

Carpenter: Oh really? Up in Tehama County. They didn't prepare themselves for any extra water.?.... and when they needed it, they ran out.

Dodson: Well I understand that they had a chance to?....

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: Uh, did your family go up for this celebration then? When the water came in?

Carpenter: Oh yes! My mother, my father, and my brother and I.

Dodson: Do you remember the trial they were having on what went on?

Carpenter: Oh yes. There is a picture of it, I think, in that paper.

Dodson: Fine, we would be glad to have that.

Carpenter: Uh hmm.

Dodson: Were you close enough that you could see Mr. Mulholland? Do you have any personal memory of him?

Carpenter: No, because I was really just sticking my finger in the water. I was just hanging over the side trying to reach the water, I remember that.

Dodson: What has been the effect on you on the earthquakes that we've had? Have you found any terrifying? Or have you taken them in stride?

Carpenter: No, I think I just take them in stride because I guess I haven't been in the center of them, I think. But I think the horror of what you see afterwards, is to me, see the whole sides of building that have been torn away. Like the Santa Barbara one, when we went up there and you see the beds hanging out the side of the rooms, the hotels' and places. And I think the horror of that was worse than the actual shake! Of course when it shakes, you, uh, there's a horrible, peculiar feeling you get with it. But to have the earth move around a bit, but still I have never been terrified of it. Because of all the, again, I have never been downtown in a big building, and I have never been in the

center of it.

Dodson: Now we know, that probably a big earthquake is coming. Are you nervous thinking of that?

Carpenter: Not the least, not at all. They told me that it was going to rain, it's why it would be just the same thing. I wouldn't think anymore about that. Only I do hate to see people injured from, as I told you, the aftermath of an earthquake that brings you to the actual one coming. But I don't really think about it.

Dodson: Now you were here in 1925, when the Santa Barbara one started.

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: Did you feel that one started here in the valley? Did you know when you felt the shock of it?

Carpenter: Yes. It was felt here.

Dodson: I've been told by people that were here in 1906, that they felt the jolt of the San Francisco earthquake.

Carpenter: Oh?

Dodson: This far south!

Carpenter: Well, ...?--...'s mother was living in Long Beach at the time, my husband's mother, and she said that she could see the smoke coming down from San Francisco. That the coastal wind brought it down, clear down to Long Beach.

Dodson: I could imagine would be serious.

Carpenter: Well, that is really bad. Well, the fire was what was really bad there.

Dodson: Yes. Now, the Long Beach earthquake did considerable damage here in the San Fernando valley.

Carpenter: Yes, uh hmm.

Dodson: Do you remember that?

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: And what you were doing? When it started?

Carpenter: Oh yes. The only thing that we can make out is that the center of it was in Long Beach and my grandmother's two sisters were down there. And they were both two old ladies and I remember being concerned about them. But, they were moved back to the park ...?.... the pictures.?.... leave her all alone. And when the earthquake hit here, in the uh, the last one that we had, in '71, why, my son was terribly upset. He started to get scared to death. And I told him, is that true? It didn't bother us a bit. Well we, it didn't we didn't feel it very much. Sherman Oaks got hit harder than we did in Encino. It was just the way the earthquake moved.

Dodson: Yes. Do you know, I have talked to the people in the town of San Fernando, who would tell me that all the houses on one side of the street would be damaged and the houses on the other side would not.

Carpenter: Yes, uh humm.

Dodson: And they couldn't for that sort of thing. The way these things, they're very erratic that way.

Carpenter: I have a friend that lived ten houses across that big shopping center over there. And she said that she was looking out, she said everything in her house was going in every direction, it didn't shake just one way. It shook in all direction. She said everything went this way, then everything went this way, and then it all went this way again. And she was telling me about her cut glass and her china and stuff and about how she just brought in a wheelbarrow and just wheeled it out. But she said she looked across, at this big market, and it was like a block from her. And she said that it just seemed that whole market raised up in the air and then settle down. And she said the pipes were busting and the water started coming out.

Dodson: Uh humm.

Carpenter: For three years to have lots of artesian wells all over the spell.

Dodson: Yes, yes, that's what I understand.

Carpenter: So, that could've been, it could've hit one of those,?.... and the water came through.

Dodson: I know that can happen when Yellowstone Park had its big earthquake a few years ago...

Carpenter: Yes...

Dodson: ...it changed the activity today.

Carpenter: Yes, it did. It moved some of the beauty of the park, too!

Dodson: Were you... you were not in school, at the time of the Long Beach earthquake? Not at the high school, were you? That would've been 1933?

Carpenter: No.

Dodson: You were out of school by then. Your children?.....

Carpenter: Uhm, yes, uh huh. I had been... I think my daughter had been in junior high there.

Dodson: Would she have been in the Van... what's now?... the Van Nuys high school?

Carpenter: Yes, uh huh.

Dodson: What exactly happened?

Carpenter: Well, the auditorium was the one place that got the damage. Because it was the oldest part of the building. And the auditorium got... it was damaged, because it crossed the structure of it. You see, it had large beams across, and I think that had had a lot to do with it. I understand now that we have the pipe organ back.

Dodson: Yes.

Carpenter: It has been repaired by the alumni and in fact, they're using it now.

Dodson: Yes, I attended the dedication of...

Carpenter: Oh, were you there for the dedication? Oh, that's nice.

Dodson: Yes, it was really a thrill to have that pipe organ go back into use again, after all these years.

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: I know that the building had to be torn down after that.

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: It must've been rebuilt, I guess. So the building there now is not the original then?

Carpenter: No, no it isn't.

Dodson: And of course our favorite elementary school was mentioned. Do you have any personal recollections of the flood that we've had in Van Nuys??

Carpenter: Yes. We had a very bad one in fourteen, we had one in eleven, no twelve. And one in fourteen, and uh, the whole townsite was flooded. I mean, the water came down to Van Nuys Boulevard, and they sent things in front of all the stores. And then they came and bolt the front and back doors of the stores buildings, they were on a level. Everything was flooded all the way down Van Nuys Boulevard.

Dodson: Was your house flooded? Or did you suffer any damage?

Carpenter: No, no, it came up to our porch. To the top of the porch, but it did not come over the porch. Or, it did not come over into the house.?....

Dodson: I understand that some houses were actually swept away, in thirty-eight?

Carpenter: Oh yes. In thirty-eight there was a lot of them that were uhm... and that would be found of course uhm... well... near where Sears and May Company, it's over there near that area.

Dodson: Uh hmm. What would you say about changes in fashions? With the passage of time?

Carpenter: Well I think the valley has kept up with everybody else. Ha ha ha... oh, we've gone through a lot of things here. Fashions and fads, why whatever's in Los Angeles, why we got it too!

Dodson: Do you feel that the sort of fashion that exists now are... how shall I put it?... are they more desirable, or less static? than the ones that were worn?

Carpenter: Yes, definitely, definitely. They're more so because they're more... no more stayed corsets! Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Ha ha ha... do you feel that's a definite improvement?

Carpenter: I think that's a help! And there's the... no high-top shoes. We have zippers on shoes nowadays with the high tops. And we used to have to laced up our boots every morning, and the children, as a child, they had to wear black and white shoes. The tops of it are white and the bottoms of it are black, and they had to be laced every morning. They don't have any more of that stuff anymore. They used to think we had to wear high top shoes for your ankle, to support them which was a fraud, but I think that uh,and they wear black and tan and yet look very feminine. I think that... I think our styles today are more better than they used to be. We had so many creases. And our clothes are better I think, because they're permanent

press and you don't have to use your iron on everything. We used to have to starch and iron and uh, even the men's, even things like that are much more leisure. And much easier on the housewife. Ha ha ha... you don't have to send them out to have them done.

Dodson: Would you be a little bit critical of the leisurely fashions of the sixties?

Carpenter: Well, ha ha... I sometimes look at some people and I wonder whose goodwill bag they've been robbing, but outside of that, if everybody was happy with what they were wearing why it's all right with me. I don't uh, I do like to see people dressed, I prefer them to be dressed. I like to see a man who's well-dressed, and a woman. But, they don't have to have the old-fashioned clothes of course. And that is one of the things that the young people are bringing out. It's the old clothes that we've discarded back then. The old style.

Dodson: Do you think there's some move back to the old style?

Carpenter: I think a lot of them are, yes. I don't think there's been as free as the newer style.

Dodson: Well, I hope they don't go back to the twenties. Those flapper dresses ...?...

Carpenter: Ha ha ha... the Roaring Twenties! With those spit curls and my headband, and the rolled stockings, and the fringe on the dresses... oh my!

Dodson: Yeah, I think the style hit an all-time low within the twenties.

Carpenter: Oh yes, I do too.

Dodson: Were there any particular fads common here in the valley that you remember? Things that have passed with the passage of time that were fads for a little while?

Carpenter: I really... I don't know, I think every year there was a fad. And uh, one year I remember, was Sloppy Joe sweater style. If you remember those. Ha ha... the sleeves were too long. They were too long, why when you wore a size twelve, you'd buy a size twenty. Ha ha ha... to it would be big and sloppy. We called them Sloppy Joes, we went through that. And, of course, all the other fads. And the petticoats. One year the girls all wear two petticoats that were starched and stiff and...

Dodson: It's probably winter out?

Carpenter: It's just clear out. I never will forget the time when my son came home and he said, "Wouldn't you know that girl up the street that plays the viola? Got on the bus with three petticoats and that darn viola? Tried to get on the school bus this morning and," he said, "it took us all to get her in!" Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Has that ever applied to Ecuador Ellie? Where they wear the skirts that went way out ...

Carpenter: She's too young for that, I think.

Dodson: I don't think she can understand from our description what we've been talking about.

Elrretti: No, I know what it is, but I don't know because....?....

Carpenter: Well, that would've been uhm, thirty years ago, that they did that. Because my son is forty and he's the

littlest and complained about the girl on the bus, with the three petticoats on. They were starched petticoats and they're made of net. And there were ruffles.

Elrretti: You mean like dancers wear?

Carpenter: Like dancers wear. And they wear them now. Now they're wearing the same ones for square dancing! The girls are wearing short dresses and the uh, for square dancing now, just below the knee. And they wear three or four of those petticoats. I just made one for my daughter-in-law.

Elrretti:?....

Dodson: It probably wasn't a custom in Ecuador and you didn't know about it even if you'd

Carpenter: You weren't ...?...

Dodson: ...yourself either....?....

Elrretti: Not really. I have pictures of some dresses that I have now what they look like. You know,?....

Dodson: We've had a lot of crazy fads and colors. But I didn't know whether you had on the general life or not. Like the time we had them swallowing some live goldfish.

Carpenter: No, I don't really care for those things. We were supposed to be through with that when we left college! Ha ha ha...

Dodson: We had that and to see how many people could fit in a telephone booth at the same time?

Carpenter: Oh yes.

Dodson: All that sort of thing?

Carpenter: No, I don't think I've heard about that in the older people. That was just the college groups that did that.

Dodson: How do you feel about morality now? As opposed to morality when you were little?

Carpenter: Oh, it certainly isn't the same! Ha ha ha... we didn't use the same language either! Uh, I don't know, I don't know what to say. Whether I approve or disapprove, I don't think that... that...

Dodson: Now, I would have a number of counselees who would be living together, without getting married.

Carpenter: Yes.

Dodson: Would that have been true in your days?

Carpenter: Definitely not! No.

Dodson: What would have been the public reaction to a couple doing that, if it were generally known that they were when they weren't married, would you say?

Carpenter: No, it was taboo that's all!

Dodson: So they just didn't do it?

Carpenter: They did not do that. I, we were talking last night, there was a group of us together, and we were all around my age. And one of them said, "Do you remember in our club," we have a club that's fifty years old, "do you remember the time when somebody came and wanted to be a member?" And we said, "?....". "Is your hus-

band a member?" And she said, "I'm not married, but I'm living with him." And they turned her down definitely. They said, "There is no way that you could be a member." And that was just one argument. I mean, this just happened to be brought up last night. We were just talking, reminiscing, as it were. But definitely, nobody lived together unless you were married.

Elrretti: ...?... everybody else.

Carpenter: Well if they did, and anybody found out they'd be tabooed. And that's all. They're just out. You wouldn't have anything to do with them. And if it were any of your, if it were school teachers or anything like that, we always had the feeling that school teachers were above those things. And that was, that was, that kind of expressed it, I guess. But if we found out that the school teacher was a homosexual, or that they were... or maybe they were! And nobody knew it, in those days, when I was going to school. But uh, but definitely, you knew their marriage status. If they were married, or if they were living with someone. You knew why and what. It was just known, that's all.

Dodson: Of course, some schools^{district} can make it very hard on women, by putting it in their contract that they could not marry. So they'd remain teachers.

Carpenter: Oh yes. I guess they threw that out.

Dodson: First time they threw that out, because that was not a very good public policy.

Carpenter: Yes, I don't believe in that at all. No. I think that's going too far into somebody's private lives...but, I... I'm not sure, either.

Dodson: Do you feel, then, that there has been a decline in morality?

Carpenter: Oh definitely!

Dodson: And you would say that you'd regard this as a very undesirable thing?

Carpenter: I think so. But of course, again, maybe I'm wrong. I'm of the older school and uh, that's the way I was raised.

Dodson: The other side of the argument is that it greatly cut down on divorce.

Carpenter: Yes. That's true. But I feel...I...I have been friends that have grandchildren. Fortunately mine are not doing that. But I do have friends that have grandchildren that have gone to live with someone. Until... maybe they move on and live with somebody else, and maybe one of them got married. But I must say that it does just go against my brain. It was just something I was not raised in. While I don't disagree with them, I just still... it's something I couldn't think of doing.

Dodson: You wouldn't disown your own grandchildren if they did live like that?

Carpenter: No, because they mean too much to me themselves. I would say to them, probably, why do you do this? or, is this the best thing? and you think it's the best for you? And then if they thought it was the best thing, and they showed me why they thought it was, then I could understand it. I would be willing to understand it. But if you just ask me right out of a whole everybody, then I would say that I don't think it's a good idea.

I'm still a little too old-fashioned, I guess. Ha ha...

Elrretti:?....

Dodson: In Ecuador they think the same thing, as she does.

Elrretti: Yes, exactly. Well, sometimes you know that your friends is playing with her boyfriend, or you know. Just because you know it ...?....

Carpenter: ...but they don't....?

Elrretti: They don't relationships?.... And nobody will know. And I don't know whether half their parents knew. They'd probably make them?....

Dodson: Well, would you break off your friendship with a friend if you knew she was doing this?

Elrretti: No. I wouldn't do that. I don't think it's?....

Dodson: I see. How about politics here in the valley? Didn't you say that the valley was definitely conservative? Or liberal? Or how would you say it was?

Carpenter: They've changed! You see, I have worked here. Everything, ever since I was twenty-one I have worked here in the register office. Of picking registration and working on election boards and I have worked all these years, on election boards, and now they just call me up and say?.... They?.... with them. Because I've been there for many years of my life and I find that....

[tape #2 side 1 ends]

Dodson: Now, you were telling us about the uh, politicals?

Carpenter: Well, about the... I have been in sections. Now, for instance, this section up here, as I say, just above?..... here has been Republicans. Now, I've noticed the last few years that I have worked on the board until now, that we've gone definitely Democrat.

Dodson: Is that right? So we do...

Carpenter: I have found the same thing out in Encino. Where it used to be the wealthy people. Now, this is not a pattern of course, but it's just a consensus. That the wealthier people had been Republicans. I have noticed things when I drive into those areas, to work. That, the Republicans areas have turned Democrat. So, now, I don't know... in the poor neighborhood, or in this neighborhood right here, was also a Democrat. But it is of course, apartment houses, and naturally, you consider those less.

Dodson: People are less influenced?

Carpenter: Yes. But, when I was out there in Encino, that's a very affluent neighborhood out there that I was working in. And I was in several of them out there, and that is the one thing that ... I don't understand it, I guess. But there has been a difference in the clientele of the neighborhood, too. The people themselves, while they are more affluent, the thing is they are not always. It used to be old families in through here, in these areas. And in Encino, they stayed the same. Now, those homes have sold to other people. And while they still have money, they are different groups of people.

Dodson: Do you think maybe dissatisfaction of Mr. Nixon's administration may have caused some people to change their political affiliations?

Carpenter: I don't think it was that, exactly. I don't know what it is, but it has something to do with something I don't understand. Because these people that are changing are from their college professors, their dentists, their psychiatrist, they're people from.... you'd think they would be more stable. That's what I mean, that's what I'm trying to say. I have been amazed at a lot of them. I'm... people that have lived in certain houses that I've known these many years, I feel that... uhm, it's changing! The neighborhood is changing. The attitude is changing. I don't know very many people myself, personally, persons that have changed. From Democrat to err... from Republicans to Democrats. But I do know that the areas are changing.

Dodson: How do you feel about the busing situation?

Carpenter: I am definitely against that! I am so happy I have no one in school, because I would be very much over the air over the whole thing. Because I don't much approve of busses in the first place. I was horified here, after school has started. I ~~went~~ out to Woodland Hills, or something, and I thought, oh I guess I'll get on the freeway and come home about 2:30. Because, my car needed to be opened up. And I thought, well, it's only about three or four miles, but it's that much. I got on the freeway and had to pull off at the next ramp. And all I could see was yellow school busses. They were old busses, they were smelly, and the air was full of smog from them, and the freeway was just jammed with them. And of course they were seedy and from all over

that end of the valley. Into the freeway here, the Ventura freeway headed to town.

Dodson: Yes.

Carpenter: And I think that it was horrible that we could be doing those things to those colored children. Bringing them clear out here to the valley. If they wanted to be out here, they'd move out here.

Dodson: How would you have felt about your children being bused? Down to South Central Los Angeles?

Carpenter: I wouldn't approve! My children would have gone to a Catholic school or something. I wouldn't, I would never have hesitated to take them out of public school. Because I wouldn't stand for it. It's not because I'm against the Catholic, the err... the colored children, at all. It's not that at all. It's just that I think this bussing thing. People live where they want to live! And they want to be where their families are. Or they would've moved there in the first place. Those people that lived in South Los Angeles, they live there because they want to live there. And they don't want to live out here in the valley. I've been raised near the Mexican people, here in the valley, and there are lots of them. And we never seen such a state...err such a prejudice. So, it's not that at all, I'd be just not approve of bringing those children in by busses.

Dodson: Would you feel that the correct interpretation would be to spend the same amount of money on improving the school? Rather than bussing?

Carpenter: Definitely!! Definitely. Give the child, where he lives, what he needs. And now, here are some papers

down there, in that box, from the Jefferson High School. Now you know, Jefferson High School is called... and the newspaper are from 1918, it was their publication that they put out. Jefferson High School was new in 1918, it was one of the nicest schools in all of Los Angeles. It was the.... it had a machine shop, it had a printing shop, it had a beauty parlor, to teach the girls the beauty work. It did all those things and it was the finest schools in Los Angeles. And today, of course, it is all black. It was getting black then, in 1918. And they had the finest equipment in the city, to teach all those children when they were out of school, when eighteen to get a job. Because they had machine shop, they could learn everything.

Dodson: Uh hmm.

Carpenter: And it was that kind of a high school. And that's where my husband went to high school. And so, I know what it was like. And, now that is a... that is a school right in the black area, and yet it was the first school in the Los Angeles system that have everything.

Dodson: How do you feel about the controversy at the present time, about the valley withdrawing from Los Angeles and becoming a separate city and county. Did you say to that? Or did you oppose it?

Carpenter: No, I don't think so. We joined the city to have free water and civic facilities. Now why would we want to pull away from them and pay for it ourselves? When there's a whole... a whole of Los Angeles to share it with us. No, I don't think so. No, I think that would be out of line.

Dodson: Now, some of those who favor it say that the valley is

paying much more in taxes, and it's getting out in the services, which is helping other parts of the city. And I guess that's the principal argument for withdrawing.

Carpenter: Oh, I don't know what they have that...now we're getting bus service, but I can't see that there's anything. It seems to me that we have everything. We have sewers, which we didn't have, we have water, we have the cheapest electricity in the country. We have...I, uh, if we went to a separate city out here, I can't see what kind of things they want to do. No, I don't see, I don't see what ...?.... I think they'll end up paying more, for less.

Dodson: Yes, they'd have a separate city bill from the city before.

Carpenter: Yes, I think they'll have more, ... they'll be paying more for less.

Dodson: Now of course in field technology, there had been tremendous changes that still occur in the valley. Do you feel that that's good or bad? That you were happier with color television, or without a color vision or?

Carpenter: I think that I have lived in the greenest era that will ever be. Because, we started out with eh, we've had radio, we've had talking pictures, we've had cars, we've had t.v., we've had instant telephone. We used to have to wait on the telephone a little bit, you know, but very efficient. We've had uh, I can't remember everything that had been invented, in the last fifty years. All I can see now is just improved. They may have added a few more things, but I don't know. I certainly would

hate to go back to washing dishes, drying clothes on the clothesline, and washing clothes by hand, those were the things that we came to here in the valley. And having one little globe drop down in the middle of the room, for light. No, I think this has been the greenest era that we'll ever see.

Dodson: Occasionally I find someone who remembers the fields of grain and that sort of thing in the valley?

Carpenter: That's right!

Dodson: And sort of misses those and misses...

Carpenter: But we moved on, we moved on.

Dodson: So you don't feel that you missed that sort of thing in the sense that you'd want to go back to it?

Carpenter: Oh no! No. Because in those days, two hundred dollars for a city lot... to put your house on. Now that same lot is worth two hundred thousand... so, I mean, those are the things that you have to consider. And you can't go back. I don't go back. I may be getting old, I have a birthday next week...

Dodson: Oh is that right?

Carpenter: I have a birthday next week.

Dodson: We're not going to ask you.

Carpenter: You're not going to ask me, all right, that's good. But, I don't live in the past. I can dig it up if I have to, but I don't... yesterday was gone... Forget it.

Dodson: I've noticed that you don't criticize everything that exists now and compare it with the past and all those things.

Carpenter: Oh no, I don't. I am moving up north, because I think it's better for me up there. But I don't know, I don't live in the past. I take every day at a time and get the most out of it, and do all I can on that day, and look forward to tomorrow.

Dodson: A very good philosophy!

Carpenter: Ha ha... you'd have to when you get to my age. There isn't much time to do it.

Dodson: So you just live each day to its fullest.

Carpenter: That's right! That's right, uhm.

Dodson: Then...

Carpenter: I'm always ready to go.

Dodson: Well that's good. We've touched a little bit about minority situations. Has there ever been minority tensions in the valley? That you know of? Tensions between various groups in the valley?

Carpenter: Not that I know of. Home that...of course years ago, we had such a thing that was called the... the uh, Spanish Grant Land out here. We thought we know about that. But no colored person could stay overnight in the valley.

Dodson: Yes, I know there had been rules like that in San...

Carpenter: Years ago, that Spanish Grant and that came with the ...?... with the old ...?... As I say, I was raised with Mexicans, and I think nothing of it. Of colored people, or Mexicans, or anything else. I don't have any... I don't have any qualms any way or the other.

Dodson: That's pretty much in line of what others told me. That there's never been any problems between the various racial groups in the valley.

Carpenter: We haven't had any, no. Uh uh, uh uh, no.

Dodson: Can you think of any interesting things that we haven't asked you about at all? A few things that ought to be preserved for posterity?

Carpenter: Oh dear, I don't know. I know that... that I have always enjoyed living in the valley, and I've lived here most of my life. And I don't think that there's uh, we've covered nearly everything that's interesting!

Dodson: Is there anything, looking back on your life in the valley, that you especially regard as good, or bad, reasonably? Any happening that was great for the valley that you remember? Or especially bad for the valley?

Carpenter: Well of course, a lot of people are fussy about the old homes being torn down and the apartments going up. But on the other hand, the only objection I have to it, is the fact that we in the beginning did not think about wide streets for the apartments because of the traffic. I think traffic is the problem now that's swamping the valley. I tried to drive to the other end of the valley last night and... about six o'clock, and I almost gave up! It took me one hour to drive down to Woodland

Hills last night, from here.

Dodson: Of course you have a problem here on Victory, it's such a narrow street.

Carpenter: Yes! That was it, you see. And we had, in the first place, we had very large lots. When this was laid out as Cahuenga Park. By the... Bundy and Allbright [sp?] open to subjugation, it used to be ...?... as chairman, general chairman. And uh, he has his ranch house back up in the canyon down here on Sepulveda. And uh, when we uh, when they laid out these huge lots, I don't know why they did it, because another street could've been put through or the streets widen on both sides. Like the next street up or this street to make it very much wider. Of course they looked very wide to us, because we were driving smaller cars and uhm, there seemed to be plenty of room because there was only four houses on the whole street. I lived right there on Vicland Street with the exception when I moved to Encino, and I moved right back to Vicland Street and I've lived in this block for fifty years.

Dodson: Oh, is that right? You've certainly seen changes!

Carpenter: It's time for me to move out! Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Well, I don't know! You're an institution here, I don't know if?....

Carpenter: That's what the neighbors have told me! Ha ha ha... They don't understand why, how I could possibly leave. And I said, well, I figured that if I don't get out now, the old rocking chair will get me and I'll never get out! Ha ha ha...

Dodson: Did you first fully know any of the uh, early figures first connected to the valley? Figures connected with the early history of the valley, like Mulholland and any of the Van Nuys families, or any members of the Lankershim families, or any of those people?

Carpenter: No, I was too young. My folks may have, but I was too young.

Dodson: I see. No, I don't usually find people who uh, who did know them, because they do belong to an earlier generation. Some of the Lankershims lived in Southern California through the 1940's certainly, but I don't think they've lived here in the valley.

Carpenter: Uh huh.

Dodson: Can you tell us about any important historic buildings, or sites that are still standing? I think you mentioned one hotel?

Carpenter: The old hotel in Van Nuys. I think the people over there still see that, it says 1911 on it. And uhm,..

Dodson: Where is that located, exactly?

Carpenter: It's between Erwin and Delano, on the west side of the street.

Dodson: Of Van Nuys Boulevard?

Carpenter: Yes, of Van Nuys Boulevard. And it still have the white brick front there. You'll have to look closely to see it, because the you know, it's a small building and two others like that are ...?.... on either side of it. But they're still using it I guess, for the?....

Dodson: Oh, is that right?

Carpenter: Uh huh.

Dodson: Can you think of any other ones that are still standing?

Carpenter: Oh, I don't know. Just about everything is gone. Even the old house that we owned is gone. It's where the health department now lives. In the civic center in Van Nuys, we owned the house that was there. And I sold that to the city.

Dodson: I see.

Carpenter: Now, let's see... there is a house on the corner of uhm, and I think it's still there I haven't been there... it's a half acre. It's the very first house that was built here. And it's on the corner of Sylmar and Sylvan. And it's on the east corner...east and uhm, north, northeast corner. And it's a two story house. There are several houses on Sylvan Street, across from the civic center there, that are old houses in Van Nuys. Those were some of the first houses built. There're some of those. Now that one house on the corner is still there. And of course the Women's Club is down on the corner of Chester and uh... I've forgotten what street it's on. Chester and... Sylvan? I believe it's Sylvan. And uh, it was built on the early days. And I think that there's a house or two... oh, and the old Kenneth [sp?] house is still there, I think.

Dodson: Where would that be located?

Carpenter: That would be across the street from the Women's Club.

Dodson: I see.

Carpenter: But it's there... I'm pretty sure it's still there. There's an apartment house on the corner and I think and I think that's the one next to it, but I'm not sure. These houses go out overnight, you know, I'm surprised everyday when I drive by and I say, well what was there? Then I have to stop and think about it a minute, and there would be a blank place.

Dodson: Well, we're trying to locate the really old houses with the idea of trying to preserve them, getting the city to designate them as cultural houses.

Carpenter: Oh yes. I think that the ...?.... house is one and then you know where Mayall or Butler's [sp?] used to be?

Dodson: Yes.

Carpenter: Well, that corner, that area in there used to be the Whitsett's house.

Dodson: And that's gone completely.

Carpenter: And that's gone completely. And then down err... they just took out the old house that uh, the Whitley [sp?] owned. He was the real estate man in the valley. And that was just taken out when they... when they took out the Craizewater [sp?], or no... yes, Craizewater [sp?]. They were using the house as a home, a funeral home and I think that was taken out. Oh, we used to have grand parties there!

Dodson: Ha ha ha... in the home?

Carpenter: No, before, before they got it!

Dodson: Ha ha ha... I thought that was odd! Ha ha ha...

Carpenter: No! No, but years ago when it was a home, as there used to be a family that lived there. And we always used to have some grand parties up there in that big old house. And then they turned it into a funeral parlor. The?....'s father and uh... That uh, the one they called Pierce Brothers in Van Nuys, that... that's an old building too. I think it was built around 1918 or something like that.

Dodson: I have not come across the old buildings still standing except the one in Los Encinos out there.

Carpenter: You mean the old adobe in this area.

Dodson: Yes.

Carpenter: Because they're nice, you see, was built right in the center of the wash, as my mother used to say. Why did you have to buy the center of the wash? Because that's the place where the money is. Ha ha ha... because the town was being built. And we used to have those dust storms that come down through the valley.

Dodson: I've heard of those and I'm glad they're gone.

Carpenter: And the valley was so, it was just like powder, the dust was. And I can remember getting, laying my head on the pillow. When I wake up in the morning, I braid my hair up and there would be a white spot where my head was on the pillow. The dust just comes... just like smoke! The valley was just...ugh! You'd've seen it as the worse dust storms you've ever heard of! And as things grew up, orchards were planted, and things like that, of

course it stopped. And then there was irrigation, it stopped a lot of it, and of course as people put in lawns, it gradually all became... oh all those first years!

Dodson: Yes, I haven't found very many of those, but now, living now, I can picture those dust storms. I haven't found very many people that are living now who can picture those dust storms.

Carpenter: Oh no.

Dodson: I've heard about them from the people I've been interviewing.

Carpenter: It was terrible, it was just terrible! It was just like smoke coming into the area. We could see them coming from San Fernando and we'd say, "Oh oh! Somebody left the tunnel door open!" Ha ha... up at Newhall.

Dodson: Well, do you have any acquaintances that you know of that you'd feel we should interview?

Carpenter: Well you've talked to the ...?... ?

Dodson: Yes.

Carpenter: And you've talked to Vanoni?

Dodson: Yes.

Carpenter: And there are some of the early dairy people here.

Dodson: We've met Ciocca, the one who had the dairy where the college is now. He's the only one so far that we've talked to.

Carpenter: Well there's the uh, ...?... and there is the uh, ...?..., and most people are still living here in the valley.

Dodson: Do you know where they live?

Carpenter: And uh, oh I know! and Mrs. Johnson [sp?] are ninety. ...?..., ...?...

Dodson: Let me write it down, the names that you've given us here.

Carpenter: Ruth Verren, V-E-R-R-E-N, Verren.

Dodson: V-E-R-R-E-N ?

Carpenter: 785-2263. Mildred Gamon, now they're old friends.

Dodson: That's G-A-M-M-O-N ?

Carpenter: Uh hmm. 785-4917. And Hannah [sp?] Morris, 344-2093.

Dodson: That's M-O-R-R-I-S ?

Carpenter: Uh hmm. Now those girls can give you some of the others because they have a full roster of the early people. I think Hannah [sp?] particularly, will have them all. A list of people that're old.

Dodson: I'm very glad to get all these! Because we're trying to find as many people as we can to get those in the valley, to get their recollections.

Carpenter: There are a lot more of them?.... But these girls will have their names, their addresses and phone numbers.

Dodson: Oh, that'll be fine. Because, you see, we're gradually building up a history of the valley by getting the recollections of different people.

Carpenter: I have some annuals, they're down there in that box, they're from Van Nuys High School. And you can have those.

Dodson: Oh, we'd love to have them.

Carpenter: And also some from Jefferson High School and also some of the Jeffersonian newspaper. I mean, if you don't want them, maybe they might want them for their record if they keep anything like that. I don't know if they do.

Dodson: Now, Jefferson wouldn't be ...

Carpenter: Not in the valley.

Dodson: It wouldn't be a recollection of the valley, of course, unless a lot of valley people were going there.

Carpenter: No, no.

Dodson: But anything we are learning about the valley, we are delighted to have.

Carpenter: Well we have those downstairs, and you can have these papers. I know you'll preserve them and take care of them.

Dodson: We shall, we'll be delighted to have them.

Carpenter: That one's getting pretty fragile, there.

Dodson: Well, we certainly appreciate very much Mrs. Carpenter, for the time you've given us. This has been our very comfortable afternoon to us.

Carpenter: I hope it has.

Dodson: It certainly has. And that interview, I'm sure, will be valued by those who hear it.

Carpenter: Well, I hope so.

Dodson: You have been listening to an interview with Mrs. Violet Carpenter, 14273 Dickens, Sherman Oaks. The interview was conducted by Dr. James L. Dodson, curator of the Los Angeles Valley College Historical Museum, and by Miss Lilly Annida Elrretti, aide to Dr. Dodson. Mrs. Carpenter not only gave us the interview, but as this tape showed, she made us a present of a number of valuable newspapers, some annuals relating to the early schools, to which she was connected, and a number of ship models. All of which we are very grateful. The date is December 10th, 1977.